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No. 25

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BALLENGER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 11, 2003.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CASS BALLENGER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

AUTHORIZE STAMP IN MEMORY OF BRAVE PEACEKEEPERS IN BEIRUT

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on October 23, 1983, the war on terrorism began when a truck filled with explosives detonated outside of the United States Marine Corps barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, killing 241 of our servicemen. Between 1982 and 1984, 270 soldiers, sailors, and Marines from 36 States lost their lives while serving as peacekeepers in Beirut.

Mr. Speaker, I have recently introduced H. Res. 45 that would express the

sense of the House that a commemorative postage stamp should be issued in remembrance of the victims of the Beirut peacekeeping mission. I am certainly not the first to pursue this effort to have the Postal Service authorize a stamp in memory of our brave peacekeepers. For 19 long years, friends, families and comrades of the Beirut victims have lobbied tirelessly to see this dream become a reality. To date, however, these efforts have been unsuccessful.

Mr. Speaker, some of the astonishing reasons that have been given for not issuing the stamp include: We try to honor positive things. People want noncontroversial, pretty stamps; Beirut lacks significance in American history, and not enough people were killed.

Mr. Speaker, I share those comments because this is what I have been told has been said to those many people who for 19 years have been asking that this stamp be created. These explanations are scant justification for failing to recognize those who have given so much to our country. I can assure Members that they amount to little more than a slap in the face to our servicemen and their families.

I am not here today to begrudge stamp selections of the past, but fair is fair. If kittens, red squirrels, Daffy Duck, Chinese dragons, circus wagons, and communist artists are worthy of commemoration by the Postal Service, then so are our fallen heroes from Beirut.

October 3 of this year will mark the 20th anniversary of the Marine Corps barracks bombing in Beirut. The friends, family, and comrades left behind by the Beirut peacekeepers will gather once again to pay their respects. This would be the appropriate time for the Federal Government to show its appreciation. Honoring these servicemen with a stamp is one way for us to finally say thank you for sacri-

ficing their lives so the rest of us can live in freedom.

A stamp in honor of the Beirut peacekeepers would not just serve to further mourn their loss, but to celebrate the peace and the American spirit that was embodied in the mission of these fallen heroes.

Mr. Speaker, in these uncertain times we call upon the brave men and women of the military to defend the ideals that this great Nation was founded upon. One of my constituents, Charles Hall of Jacksonville, North Carolina, was called upon 19½ years ago; and he served our country honorably in Beirut. He will be the first to tell Members that the war on terrorism began well before September 11.

Mr. Speaker, in April the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee will convene in Washington to consider stamp proposals and make recommendations to the Postmaster General. On behalf of military families across the United States, I urge the committee to do what is right for those who made the ultimate sacrifice. I urge them to reconsider that a commemorative stamp be issued in remembrance of the Beirut peacekeepers.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to close in a certain way. I first ask God to please bless the men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless the families of the men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless the House and Senate that we might do what is right for the future of this Nation. And I ask God to please bless the President of the United States that he will lead this Nation and this world to a better and peaceful world.

Mr. Speaker, I close by asking three times, God please, God please, God please, continue to bless America.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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